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AUTHOR Hyle, Adrienne E.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A national stratified random sample of superintendents (N=432) responded to a 42-item questionnaire listing probable causes of students dropping out. They were asked to identify causes that they believe should be given high priority as well as those that had the necessary research foundation from which to develop significant intervention programs. Responses were compared by rural, suburban, and urban school locale. There was little consensus on which causes possessed the necessary research base to guide interventions. Causes that were given high priority by suburban superintendents included the need to support a spouse or child, conflict with schools and teachers, being too old, having too many learning disabilities, and experiencing discrimination. Causes given high priority by urban superintendents were: lack of parental support of education; poverty; lack of daycare for children of teens; and discrimination. High-priority causes identified by rural superintendents were: being too old for the peer group, poverty, and lack of daycare for children of teens. The data support the belief of many superintendents that the most severe problems of dropouts are not those associated with public education but those of the children and their families. Much more education of superintendents is needed to increase their belief that they can affect changes that will help resolve the dropout problem; if this is not done, it is possible that superintendents will continue to blame the victims, not the schools, and to live with high dropout rates. It would also be helpful for Colleges of Education to report research on dropout programs in refereed publications as well as in periodicals read by administrators. Contains 53 references. (Author/KS)

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THE DROPOUT PROBLEM:

Superintendent's Priorities by School Locale

Adrienne E. Hyle

Kay S. Bull

B. Keith Salyer

Diane Montgomery

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Abstract

A national stratified random sample of superintendents (N=432) responded to a 42 item questionnaire listing probable causes of students dropping out. They were asked to identify causes which they believed were a high priority as well as those which had the necessary research foundation from which to develop significant intervention programs. Responses were compared by rural, suburban and urban school locale.

There was little consensus on which causes possessed the necessary research base to guide interventions. Differences by location included suburban priorities of need to support spouse/child, conflict with schools and teachers, being too old, too many learning disabilities and discrimination. Urban priorities were no parental support of education, poverty, no daycare and discrimination. Rural priorities were being too old for the peer group, poverty and no daycare for teens with children.

These data support the belief that the most severe problems of dropouts are not those associated with public education but those of the children and their families. If the problem is with the child, it will be difficult for education to make a difference. If the problem is with education, we might change and thereby benefit the child.

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM:

Superintendent's Priorities by School Locale

Students are choosing not to complete a high school education at an alarming rate. There are those who believe the schools are at fault. Others blame parents; many blame the students. Some blame these groups in combination. Questioning why American students drop out of school typically leads to a wide variety of answers.

The current concern with dropouts in America has generated a great deal of debate and a large body of literature which examines both causes and solutions to this problem. There is, however, little consensus about which variables are most important (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1989), particularly to those who must make decisions about the implementation of programs designed to solve the problem, school district superintendents.

This study was designed, in part, to examine and possibly remedy this lack of knowledge. Specifically, we wanted to know of superintendents which of the causes of dropping out should be national priorities, and, based upon existing research, which one(s) do they know enough about to be able to implement programs within their districts designed to solve the problems, assuming the availability of funding. We also wanted to examine the differences, if any, that existed in the views of rural, urban and suburban superintendents to these two questions.

To insure that current and common issues were represented, a literature search over the last five years was conducted, yielding several hundred reports on the dropout problem. Content analysis resulted in four groups of variables related to the causes identified for dropping out, leaving or withdrawing from school: 1) school, 2) peer, 3) home/family and 4) intrapersonal.

School Variables

Studies of how schools contribute to the dropout problem failed to reflect consensual findings. In fact, the same variables were rarely examined and the schools themselves had very different populations which reacted differently to the pressures of schooling.

It was obvious, however, that school environments have a compelling effect on the success rates of specific groups of students. Indeed, schools display an interest or disinterest in some groups of students for various reasons. As an extreme example, students who have been incarcerated in juvenile corrections institutions are usually not actively sought by schools nor are they always provided appropriate educational services while they are incarcerated. This reality is evident when only two percent of this type of student finishes high school (Haberman & Quinn, 1986).

Conflicts between students and the school or between students and individual teachers or administrators are cited frequently as a prominent cause in dropping out (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987). Dropping out seems to be particularly likely if the conflict leads to suspension of the student.

Conflict in school many times centers around academic performance. The lack of earned credits has been shown to play a part in dropping out (Tidwell, 1985a), as have poor grades (Self, 1985). Students who have little hope of graduating because they have been retained one or more years, or because they have failed too many classes, are likely dropout candidates as well (Widmann & Hoisden, 1988). This has lead several authors (Gold, 1985; Catterall, 1986; Hamilton, 1986; McDill, Natriello & Pallas, 1986; Mizell, 1987) to question the applicability of raising graduation standards in districts worried about dropouts.

This concern about increasing standards for graduation is related to the impact that the use of competency tests, tied to higher standards, may have on the dropout rate. In these and in other academically pressured situations, the lack of a vocation or a non-college entry career option in high school may increasingly doom more students to failure, thereby increasing the dropout rate (Reynolds, 1986; Bishop, 1988; Weber & Sechler, 1988).

Students who are in special education programs are also at-risk. Mildly handicapped students who see that they cannot compete academically, yet believe that they will be functional in the real world, will probably not see school as a viable alternative (Lichtenstein & Zantal-Weiner, 1988).

Students whose main interest in school is athletics are likely to drop out when they are no longer eligible for sports due to requirements for meeting academic achievement standards or age limits. These athletes have been termed "disposable children" from the school's point of view (Ligon, 1988).

School practices and policies for attendance, academics and behavior in relation to stereotypical perceptions of students can affect dropout rates too (Wheelock, 1986). The school's tolerance for student diversity can also have an influence on whether the students stay in school. Dropping out among blacks is related to fear and self-doubt about their abilities. This fear is fostered by strong stereotypes by white teachers about black intellectual capacities (Hammond & Howard, 1986). Many black and Hispanic students report that they left school because of personal and cultural dehumanization or academic humiliation (Smith, 1986) brought about through lack of recognition of cultural/ethnic diversity.

Minority students, especially Hispanic, drop out because they do not have adequate role models (Illinois State Task Force on Hispanic Student

Dropouts, 1985). The lack of role models probably affects all segments of the population to some extent; however, it seems to have particular impact on disadvantaged minorities.

A whole range of school-related variables affect districts' abilities to keep children in school. The range of variables include conflict or lack of recognition to the lack of appropriate programs. The literature indicates that all of these variables may play an important part in keeping children in school or encouraging them to leave.

Peer Variables

Peers can influence students to leave school. Friends out of school may display attractive alternatives like cars and money that students who are in school do not have. These displays seem to be particularly attractive when both the students and the peers are "delinquent" (Dunham & Alpert, 1987). These "system failure" peers show no affiliation to school and draw those still in the educational system away from it directly through enticement and indirectly through modeling.

Some peer related variables include individual differences that exclude group membership. Many gifted students drop out because they feel too different from their peer group (Bull & Garrett, 1989). In many cases, gifted learners have no peer group with similar interests and motivations. When these students tire of educational task repetition, there is nothing to bond them to the educational process. Many gifted dropouts, however, go on to college (Irvine, 1987).

Another variable, particularly related to urban schools, is peer violence. Peer violence keeps many children away from schools and can cause them to drop out if they are severely threatened (Perales, 1988). This situation can also be exaggerated if there are gang "turf," or territorial

problems associated with the school.

Peer group relationships are widely addressed in the literature. These variables relate to things that peers may do, may model for the dropout, or may inveigle others into doing, all of which may directly cause dropping out or may lead to conflicts which subsequently cause the student to drop out.

Home/Family Variables

Many students are embedded in home or family situations which affect their school persistence. Children whose families do not have strong backgrounds in education and who do not support the educational process are more likely to drop out (Barr & Knowles, 1986; Coleman, 1988). This is compounded when the community provides the same weak (or nonexistent) level of support for academic learning (Watt, Guajardo & Markman, 1987).

Those students who do not have active parental involvement in their education or who do not have parental contact, such as children placed in foster homes, are also likely to drop out. This is particularly true for minority students (Schwaback, 1985). Generally, students who have poor family relationships are more at-risk than those who do not (O'Connor, 1985; Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1985). And, as families become more disassociated and less functional, the dropout rate increases (Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, 1987).

Intrafamilial problems, sexual and physical abuse, parental disorders, such as alcoholism and cultural differences (Ediger, 1987), all lead to deemphasis of education and increases in dropout behavior.

Students may be responsible for younger siblings or for part of a family business and are not able to attend enough school to graduate (Tidwell, 1985b). These students are likely dropouts. Many dropouts report a need to make money and to help out at home as a reason for leaving school (Hartford

Public Schools, 1987). Leaving school seems to be particularly likely when job retention is predicated on truancy (e.g., the student cuts class to meet job requirements or to make hours) (Raffe, 1986).

Other family variables which seem to be related to persistence include being a member of a migrant family (Morse, 1987). School attendance for migrants is haphazard at best, and being a member of a minority group in various communities for short periods of time puts students at-risk. This seems to be particularly true in rural areas (Benally, Cole, & Quexzada-Aragon, 1987; Harrington, 1987).

There are also problems related to children raising children. Many young high school age parents drop out of school to care for or support their own children if adequate financial support and day-care is not provided (Spence, 1986; Polit & Kahn, 1987).

Family-related variables are any that lead to disadvantage and include socio-economic situations, conflicting relationships, abuse, neglect and lack of support for education.

Intrapersonal Variables

For young women, pregnancy is one of the frequently cited causes of dropping out of school (Stone, 1985; Hartford Public Schools, 1987; Ediger, 1987). Dropping out can come because of school policy, because of family pressure or because of embarrassment. After a child is born, school rules and the availability of support systems for child care influence persistence.

Another significant intrapersonal variable relates to habitual substance abuse, whether alcohol or drugs. Mensch and Kandel (1988) report that the majority of drug users drop out even when controlling for other variables. This is also supported by Ediger (1987), Smith (1986) and Friedman, Glackman, and Utada (1985).

Often, medical problems keep children out of school until too much is missed for the student to keep up. These health problems can be chronic, life threatening or related to pregnancy. If the problems are not resolved, they can lead to students dropping out (Levy, 1987).

School leaving behavior (truancy, runaway) on the part of the learner can lead to expulsion, to academic failure, and to the inability to earn credit because of too many absences. Raffe (1986) talks of truancy as an indicator of lack of school persistence. In the extreme, running away has the same effect.

Some students, particularly minority or limited english proficiency, react to low reading ability and to ranking below average in their classes by dropping out (Schultz, Toles, Rice, Brauer, & Harvey, 1986). Additionally, developmentally disabled students who become adjudicated delinquents are increasingly at-risk (McMahan 1986).

Students also become alienated from school when they believe that they have no role to play. Many dropouts feel excluded from the school life of high school (Fennimore, 1989). This seems to be less of a problem in smaller predominantly rural schools (Barker & Gump, 1964).

Recent data indicates that rural children are perceived as having more problems related to dropping out than do urban and suburban children (34 of 39 comparisons; Helge, 1990). They are more likely to experience economic difficulties, social difficulties, have low aspirations, poor self-esteem, more dysfunctional families and be more depressed and suicidal. For this reason, this study addresses school locale as well as causes for dropping out.

Many students who drop out report that school is boring and a waste of their time (Tidwell, 1985a; Barr & Knowles, 1986; Hartford Public Schools, 1987). Others who drop out report frustration with learning the academic

content (Barr & Knowles, 1986) or low grades (Comerford & Jacobson, 1987; Natriello et al., 1985). Many of these students are functionally illiterate in reading and mathematics (Bernick, 1986), which leads to alienation from the school process. Problems with academics are compounded when the students perceive that they are viewed as members of a "lower class" by their teachers (O'Connor, 1985).

Summary and Significance

Given the wide range of variables that can lead students to drop out of school, the urgency of answers to the research questions in this study becomes apparent. Superintendents are the individuals who will have the greatest opportunity to make decisions in conjunction with boards of education and other community/school members about programs designed to fight the battle of keeping children in school. Their views of which causes of dropping out should be national priority items in this battle are very important. Their perspectives on the sufficiency of the research base for solving problems associated with student retention is also important. If they do not believe information is available yet others know it is, a dangerous miscommunication exists and must be remedied.

Methodology

Scale Development

The scale used in this study was developed by Bull, Salyer and Montgomery (1990). In addition to demographic information, participants responded to a total of 42 item stems, each presented with two sets of Likert-like questions (1 = strongly, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree). The four variable groups identified from the literature review were used to generate the scale that was used in this study. Each item stem contained a term found in the literature which had been

identified as a cause for dropping out, withdrawing, being removed or leaving school early.

When it was thought that the term might be unclear a parenthetical clarification was added. For example, in the case of frustration it read "(for slow or unserved handicapped when education is too hard, instruction undifferentiated, teachers inflexible)."

Two responses were requested for each item. The first response, Set A, asked superintendents whether the cause of dropping out was one which should be identified and worked on as a national priority. For the second response, Set B, superintendents were asked to agree or disagree that "enough research has been done, related to this cause, so that we could deal with it effectively if enough resources were committed."

Subjects

The subjects for this study were superintendents selected from the 1989 edition of Patterson's American Education (Moody, 1989). The sample was randomly selected and stratified by size of state (large, medium and small, on the basis of population), to yield a total of 650.

The first mailing elicited 260 returns, two follow-ups were conducted; the first after eight weeks, the second after sixteen weeks. The three mailings generated a total of 432 responses. This yielded a total return rate of 66%.

Results

Data were analyzed using the SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987) microcomputer package with default options except where otherwise indicated.

Demographics

The sample of superintendents was composed of 369 males and 50 females (13 were unidentified). On the average, they had 10 years of experience as

building level administrators, 10.5 years of teaching experience and 11 years in central administration. Participants identified their schools according to rural, suburban and urban categories as follows: 197 rural, 94 urban and 107 suburban. The majority (68%) reported that they were practicing in middle class districts, 6 were from upper class districts and 57 from lower class districts.

Chi-Square Analyses

One-way chi squares were computed for all items in both sets. For ease of presentation the data were collapsed into 3-point scales combining the strongly agree, agree responses and the strongly disagree, disagree responses. The expected values then became 40%, 20%, 40% by category. Data for Set A are reported in Table 1. Data for Set B are reported in Table 2.

Set A Responses. Set A data show 75% agreement among all superintendents with eight items believed to be causes of dropping out that should be identified and worked on as a national priority. In rank order, they are:

1) 91% - Parental problems (divorce, unemployment, separation).
2) 90% - Dysfunctional/unstable family (causing stress of a variety of types).
3) 87% - Truancy (too many classes missed and hours of detention to face).
4) 86% - Substance abuse.
5) 85% - No hope of graduating (failed too much already, educationally discouraged).
6) 81% - Emotional problems (suicidal, depression, low self-esteem, psychosis of various kinds).
7) 78% - No parent support for education (active parental pressure against continuing), and

8) 75% - Alienated from school.

In addition, from Set A, nine items received less than 30% agreement. These items clearly are not priority problems for this group. From least to most support, they are:

1) 12% - Discrimination (particularly by teachers against minority students).
2) 15% - Medical problems (which make school success difficult, unlikely or less meaningful, e.g., terminal illness).
3) 21% - Peer violence (perceived lack of safety in the schools).
4) 23% - No peer group (especially gifted).
5) 23% - Too different from peer group (e.g., physically handicapped or extremely gifted).
6) 25% - Personal, cultural and linguistic dehumanization (no multicultural training for teachers).
7) 28% - Being in special classes (no perceived reward in education).
8) 29% - Lack of teacher role models (e.g., minorities).
9) 29% - Lack of non-college bound education (no vocational /technical or business track).

Set B Data. For the same causes of dropping out, research sufficiency was not found at a 75% agreement level[1]. The research base on causes of students dropping out of school is lacking in the view of respondents in this study.

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[1]Many of the items are significant when examined using the Chi-square statistic, but in each instance, the undecided category is the largest response category (remember that the expected value of the collapsed item scale is 40 agree, 20 undecided and 40 disagree).

Rural/Urban/Suburban Comparisons

Analysis of variance was used to compare responses across school locations for each of the 42 items for both response sets. Table 3 summarizes findings for Set A and Table 4 contains Set B findings.

For Set A, 11 item comparisons were significant ($p < .05$; with significant Tukey post hocs). In none of the comparisons were suburban superintendents perspectives of causes of dropping out significantly higher than those of urban or suburban superintendents. It appears that superintendents in suburban schools are not plagued by these causes of dropping out in the same way as their counterparts in rural and large city schools.

Urban superintendents noted four causes of dropping out as significantly more important than did their suburban counterparts. Need to support a spouse or child, conflict with school administration, conflict with one or more teachers and learning disabilities (not adequately dealt with by schools) were all noted as causes of dropping out that urban superintendents, significantly more than suburban superintendents, believed needed to be worked on as national priority items.

Rural superintendents noted three causes of dropping out as significantly more important to work on as national priority items than did their urban counterparts. These included being too old for a peer group (retained), lack of daily attendance support (no counselor, truant officer or program to work in attendance) and personal, cultural and linguistic dehumanization. These same causes were noted by urban superintendents as significantly more important to work on as national priority items than their suburban counterparts. Both rural and urban superintendents believe these items to be of greater importance than do suburban superintendents.

Rural superintendents also believe that no parental support for education should be a priority item at the national level more significantly than did their suburban counterparts.

Rural superintendents also reported that poverty and no daycare (for teens with children) are causes of dropping out that should be worked on as national priority items significantly more than do their urban and suburban counterparts. They also reported that discrimination (particularly by teachers against minority students) should be a national priority more than their suburban and urban superintendent counterparts. But, urban superintendents reported the same belief more significantly than did suburban superintendents.

Two Set B comparisons were significant ($p < .05$; with significant Tukey post hocs). Urban superintendents, more than their suburban counterparts, believed that a sufficient research base existed in the areas of substance abuse and dysfunctional/unstable families and intervention programs could be successfully implemented with appropriate funding. Table 4 summarizes these findings.

Discussion

Examination of the Set A and Set B data shows most superintendents in agreement that the major causes of dropping out reside in the home or in the child. Dysfunctional families, truancy and substance abuse top the list. The causes of dropping out receiving the least agreement by superintendents are those related to the school. Lack of teacher role models, being in special classes and a lack of multicultural training for teachers are not believed by superintendents to be high priority items affecting students dropping out of school. The national priority agenda set forth here appears to be one that focuses on fixing the homes of students and fixing the children themselves.

There was little agreement concerning which causes the superintendents knew enough about to design and implement programmatic interventions. Interestingly, in addition to none of the 42 causes drawing 75% support, none of the causes listed drew less than 30% support either. Therefore, in terms of a research knowledge base, all superintendents in the field are familiar with causes of dropping out.

Comparisons across school locations produced interesting findings. The white flight into suburban locales may explain the lack of suburban superintendent responses significantly outweighing those of urban or rural superintendents. The reality that life in public education is greener in the middle may be substantiated by this research.

In urban districts, conflict both with school and teachers is noted as a reason for dropping out of school that should be a national priority. Learning disabilities and the need to support family were also top priority items for urban superintendents. These perspectives were significantly different when compared with those of suburban but not rural superintendents. It appears that these items may well be of concern for rural superintendents as well.

All other significant differences involve rural superintendent's beliefs about the need to consider causes as top priority items and work on them as a national priority. Any belief that life and education in rural America is easy is dispelled by these superintendents who note poverty, discrimination and dehumanization over their suburban and even urban counterparts.

There were only two significant comparisons concerning the sufficiency of the research base. Because the F's are small and the family-wise error rate is approached, these should be interpreted with caution. But, in both cases, urban superintendents believed they could act given the existing research base.

Conclusions

A reasonable conclusion to be drawn from these data is that much more education of superintendents is needed. School and peer related problems must receive closer scrutiny by public education if the full range of causes of dropping out are to be taken into consideration. If this is not done, it is possible that superintendents will continue to blame the victim, not schools, and live with high dropout rates.

We expected to see at least one school related variable in the high priority list, but that did not happen. Explanations for this finding create scenarios that seem problematic. It is possible that the superintendents responding to this questionnaire chose to focus outside their own immediate arena when noting causes of dropping out that needed to on the nation's priority list of concerns. They chose a national focus, not a focus in their own backyard. It is also possible that these superintendents do not believe they can affect changes that will be able to assist the dropout problem. The causes of dropping out are so strongly tied to society that the schools can only touch the top of the dropout iceberg. It is also possible that they do not see their own school districts as contributing to the problem of student persistence. The focus for change must be, therefore, other than within the district. Any of these conclusions is plausible, but it seems the first is the only reasonable and responsible one.

Dissemination of information about successful programs to aid the dropout needs to occur. This would enhance the superintendents' knowledge of successful programs and could be used as a model for implementation elsewhere. Dissemination of unsuccessful programs needs to occur as well. Someone else's failure might be the foundation for another administrators exemplary program.

Finally, there are differences based on locale. In suburban areas, no real priorities emerged. The grass is perceived to be greener for suburban

America and the dropout. In urban areas, priorities relate to school and teacher conflict, student learning disabilities and need to support family, concerns that could be addressed by schools. In rural areas, the causes of dropping out are both societal and educational. Poverty is not likely to be addressed by public education, but dehumanization, discrimination, lack of a peer group and lack of parental support for education could be.

Rural superintendents appear to recognize realities associated with dropouts that neither suburban nor urban superintendents have acknowledged. The diversity found within rural communities may be such that a wider range of causes of dropping out are experienced. Rural superintendents may also have greater problems than their suburban and urban counterparts because their diverse communities require such different strategies for successful retention of students. This seems a fruitful area for further research.

It should behoove all of those in Colleges of Education who do research to report it in refereed research publications as well as in periodicals read by administrators of all types, including superintendents. It should also behoove us to report successful as well as unsuccessful projects. Successful programs need to be lauded and unsuccessful projects examined critically. Superintendents in all locales are aware of causes of dropping out, even though they rank them differently. It should also be noted that they still have much to learn.

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Table 1

Superintendents Responses to the Question: Should this possible cause of dropping out be a national priority? (A Data)

Abbreviated Item Expected value		Cases (40)	(20)	(40)	N	Chi-Square***
1. Boredom		222	32	116	370	67.76
2. Frustration		249	26	96	372	80.00
3. Pregnancy		219	36	116	371	60.33
4. Support spouse		153	42	171	366	17.73
5. Medical problems*	(15)	54	56	262	372	151.06
6. Emotional problems**	(81)	303	32	40	375	261.38
7. Earn Money		248	28	96	372	113.81
8. Get away from home		217	44	110	371	53.94
9. Conflict school		143	46	178	367	16.96
10. Conflict teacher		165	40	163	368	19.19
11. No hope graduate**	(85)	315	11	46	372	310.68
12. No peer support educ.		234	50	88	372	81.63
13. No prt. support ed.**	(78)	290	25	59	374	219.79
14. No community sup. educ.		166	41	166	373	18.92
15. No non-col. ed track*	(29)	108	27	236	371	92.73
16. Substance abuse**	(86)	319	26	24	369	333.50
17. In special educ.*	(28)	102	79	189	370	25.99
18. No peer group*	(23)	85	77	211	373	53.30
19. Too old		138	43	191	372	26.00
20. Too different*	(23)	85	70	216	371	58.12
21. Truant**	(87)	324	11	39	374	339.50
22. Migrant		171	120	79	368	66.58
23. Illiterate		244	54	75	373	102.82
24. Dysfun. family**	(90)	338	24	12	375	350.00
25. Child abuse		260	63	51	374	148.32
26. Poverty		174	61	137	372	NS
27. In crime		241	52	77	370	99.04
28. No daycare		161	75	135	371	NS
29. No teacher role model*	(29)	109	56	206	371	37.28
30. Peer violence*	(21)	78	49	242	369	101.53

( ) = percent of agreement
** = 75% agreement
* = less than 30% agreement
*** = All chi-squares significant at .000 except as indicated NS

Table 1 (continued)

Superintendents Responses to the Question: Should this possible cause of dropping out be a national priority? (A Data)

Abbreviated Item		Cases			N	Chi-Square***
Expected value		(40)	(20)	(40)		
31. Learning disabilities		135	46	189	370	23.10
32. Discrimination*	(12)	45	61	266	372	161.13
33. Dehumanization*	(25)	93	101	178	372	36.17
34. Fail competency test		176	70	126	372	NS
35. No truant officer		185	33	154	372	32.03
36. Sports ineligible		169	48	152	369	NS
37. Runaway		204	68	98	370	38.57
38. Foster home		136	105	127	368	17.02
39. Parental problems**	(91)	338	11	21	370	406.53
40. Living on one's own		240	64	65	369	105.37
41. Home responsibilities		226	55	86	367	72.52
42. Alienated**	(75)	273	34	59	366	182.65

( ) = percent of agreement

* = less than 30% agreement

** = 75% agreement

*** = All chi-squares significant at .000 except as indicated NS

Table 2

Superintendents Responses to the Question: Has enough research been done on this possible cause of dropping out? (B Data)

Abbreviated Item	Cases			N	Chi-Square***
Expected value	(40)	(20)	(40)		
1. Boredom	199	64	98	361	36.49
2. Frustration	220	44	95	359	67.86
3. Pregnancy	241	48	69	358	113.02
4. Support spouse	202	75	81	358	51.32
5. Medical problems	154	107	96	357	33.97
6. Emotional problems	167	56	136	359	NS
7. Earn Money	191	66	103	360	27.51
8. Get away from home	148	85	126	359	NS
9. Conflict school	165	82	111	358	NS
10. Conflict teacher	174	68	117	359	NS
11. No hope graduate	218	39	107	364	61.93
12. No peer support educ.	152	90	113	355	11.71
13. No prt. support ed.	158	61	138	357	NS
14. No community sup. educ.	144	88	125	357	NS
15. No non-college ed track	189	69	98	356	29.16
16. Substance abuse	215	36	110	361	60.86
17. In special educ.	166	104	91	361	36.99
18. No peer group	144	114	102	360	36.75
19. Too old	155	94	112	361	NS
20. Too different	137	114	110	361	32.77
21. Truant	216	37	108	361	61.84
22. Migrant	134	140	85	359	89.34
23. Illiterate	200	70	90	360	42.08
24. Dysfunctional family	161	61	139	361	NS
25. Child abuse	156	75	129	360	NS
26. Poverty	145	106	110	361	24.02
27. In crime	169	97	92	358	31.97
28. No daycare	165	105	89	359	39.30
29. No teacher role model	174	97	88	359	36.81
30. Peer violence	171	97	94	362	30.92

* = less than 30% agreement

** = 75% agreement

*** = All chi-squares significant at .000 except as indicated NS

Table 2 (continued)

Superintendents Responses to the Question: Has enough research been done on this possible cause of dropping out? (B Data)

Abbreviated Item	Cases			N	Chi-Square***
Expected value	(40)	(20)	(40)		
31. Learning disabilities	207	63	92	362	47.19
32. Discrimination	158	99	103	360	23.16
33. Dehumanization	135	127	101	363	54.93
34. Fail competency test	158	100	100	358	25.83
35. No truant officer	198	59	103	360	34.27
36. Sports ineligible	181	80	98	359	25.16
37. Runaway	160	109	93	362	38.63
38. Foster home	131	139	89	359	84.76
39. Parental problems	182	45	133	360	20.99
40. Living on one's own	141	100	118	359	15.69
41. Home responsibilities	157	93	106	356	17.48
42. Alienated	165	71	121	357	NS

* = less than 30% agreement

** = 75% agreement

*** = All chi-squares significant at .000 except as indicated NS

Table 3

Significant Comparisons by Locale* of Responses to the Question: Should this possible cause of dropping out be a national priority? (A Data)

Item	U/S	U/R	S/U	S/R	R/U	R/S**
1. Need to support spouse/child	X					
2. Conflict with school administration	X					
3. Conflict with one or more teachers	X					
4. No parent support for education						X
5. Too old for peer group (retained)	X				X	
6. Poverty					X	X
7. No daycare (for teens with children)					X	X
8. Learning disabilities (not adequately dealt with by schools)	X					
9. Discrimination (particularly by teachers against minority students)	X				X	X
10. Personal, cultural and linguistic dehumanization	X				X	
11. Lack of daily attendance support (no counselor, truant officer or program to work in attendance)	X				X	

* Significant comparisons also had significant Tukey post hocs.

** U/S = Urban > Suburban
U/R = Urban > Rural
S/U = Suburban > Urban
S/R = Suburban > Rural
R/U = Rural > Urban
R/S = Rural > Suburban

Table 4

Significant Comparisons by Locale* of Responses to the Question: Has enough research been done on this possible cause of dropping out? (B Data)

Item	U/S	U/R	S/U	S/R	R/U	R/S**
1. Substance abuse	X					
2. Dysfunctional/Unstable family	X					

* Significant comparisons also had significant Tukey post hocs.

** U/S = Urban > Suburban
U/R = Urban > Rural
S/U = Suburban > Urban
S/R = Suburban > Rural
R/U = Rural > Urban
R/S = Rural > Suburban